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REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending. Claims 4 and 16 are allowed in the final Office action mailed 05/27/2004, and claim 3 was allowed in the Office action mailed 12/12/2003. Claims 7, 8, 11-14, 17 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, and are indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. The Applicant sincerely thanks the Examiner for the allowance of claims 3, 4, and 16, and the indication of allowability of claims 7, 8, 11-14, 17, and 18. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, and 19-21 stand rejected.

Claims 7, 11, 13, and 17 are rewritten in independent form, and claims 1, 8, 11-14, 17, and 18 are now believed to be allowable in light of the Examiner's indication on page 2 of the Office action. Claims 1, 15, and 20 are amended to improve the form of the claim and to more clearly differentiate claims 1, 15, and 20 from the prior art, in accordance with the Examiner's comments on page 3 of the final Office action. Support for amended claims 1, 15, and 20 is found in the Written Description on page 6, lines 7-16. These amendments do not add new matter.

Rejections of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 15, and 20 stand rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,417,842 to Shattuck (hereinafter "Shattuck") in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,469,693 to Chiang et al. (hereinafter "Chiang"). Claim 1 is amended to recite that the first fulcrum provides a first selected spring constant and that the second fulcrum supports the second cantilevered so as to provide a second spring constant. The combination of the first and second selected spring constants enables, among other things, a mouse button with an increasing force profile (palm to finger direction), as shown in Table 2. The trigger arms shown in Shattuck appear to be essentially rigid structures that swivel or otherwise move in relation to the mouse button to which they are attached (see Shattuck, Fig. 3, ref. nums. 20 ("mouse control button") and 30 ("L-shaped structure"/"device")). The trigger arms used in Shattuck alter the force used to actuate the mouse control button by changing where force is applied (the "pressure point"), namely, by applying the force to the trigger arm rather than to the mouse control button.

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Furthermore, claim 1 recites that the second cantilevered beam has an exposed button portion, whereas Shattuck shows a conventional mouse control button with various structures and devices affixed to the mouse control button. As recited in claim 1, the second fulcrum supports the second cantilevered beam from the second end of the first cantilevered beam. No such structure appears in Shattuck. Claims 15 and 20 have been amended in a similar fashion.

The Applicant respectfully requests entry of these amendments and believes that upon entry claims 1, 15, 20, and all claims that depend from claims 1, 15, and 20 will be in condition for allowance.

Claim 5 stands rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,417,842 to Shattuck (hereinafter "Shattuck") in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,469,693 to Chiang et al. (hereinafter "Chiang"). Claim 5 recites the novel and advantageous feature of a switch button coupled to the housing so as to move about a fulcrum, the fulcrum being nearer to the distal end than to the palm end of the switch button. In the previous Office action, mailed 12/12/2003, the Examiner referenced Fig. 3 of Shattuck to show that the arm can be oriented backwards so that the pressure point of the lever is closer to the distal end than the palm end. However, the arm is not a mouse button, and the arm is not attached to the housing so as to move about a fulcrum. Rather, the arm is attached to the mouse control button 20. Therefore, the Applicant believes that claim 5 and all claims that depend from claim 5 are allowable.

Entry of This Amendment

The Applicant recognizes that the Examiner has discretion in entering an amendment after final rejection, and believes that the present amendment is sufficiently focused to be appropriate for entry.

The Applicant believes this amendment directly addresses the Examiner's concerns regarding certain aspects of the claim language prior to this amendment. Applicants have more fully recited the interrelationships of the claim elements in order to underscore the distinctions over the prior art. Thus, even if the Examiner is not persuaded to allow this application, this amendment places the application in better condition for appeal.

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This amendment is believed to not require additional search or raise new issues. The Examiner, in his remarks stating that the Applicants invention differs from Shattuck's invention but that the distinctions that the Applicant has made in the arguments are absent from the language of claim 1, appears to be implying that the issue is not one of no patentable invention, but rather one of overly broad claim language.

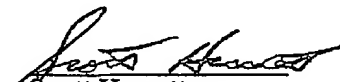
The Applicant believes that this amendment could not have been made earlier because the previous amendment is believed to have been fully responsive to the rejection, and it is believed that the Examiner's position in the final Office action set the stage for Applicants to respond directly to the Examiner's concerns. Entry is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant believes all claims pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The Applicant respectfully requests entry of this amendment, the withdrawal of all rejections, and the issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date.

If the Examiner believes this amendment does not put all pending claims in condition for allowance, or should any minor informalities need to be addressed, the undersigned invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned at (707) 591-0789.

Respectfully submitted,


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